(iii) National Parks and Sanctuaries which constitute the Protected Areas have been kept aside for the conservation of wildlife and bio-diversity.

(iv) Guidelines have been issued for rationalizing the felling and tranist regulations for tree species grown on non-forest land to promote large scale afforestation in non-forest areas.

(v) Implementation of National Afforestation Programme (NAP) for the regeneration of degraded forest and adjoining the forest land during the Tenth Five Year Plan.

(vi) Multi Stake-holder Partnerships (MSP) involving state forest departments, the local village communities and private sector has been mooted for afforestation of degraded lands.

Declaration of Saranda Forests as virgin forests

2467. SHRI PRASANTA CHATTERJEE: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government would agree to declare Saranda forests under Jharkhand State as virgin forest; and

(b) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) There is no provision under any forest or related law to declare a forest as "Virgin Forests". Moreover, harvesting has been carried out in Saranda forest from 1880 to 1980 as per the prescription made in the working plan. Therefore, the Saranda forests can not be called as "Virgin Forests."

Lakes of Kerala under NLCP

2468. SHRI N.K. PREMACHANDRAN: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) how many lakes from Kerala are included in the Ramsar site and whether Vembanadu lake from Kerala is included in the National Lake Conservation Programme;

(b) whether Government would consider to implement any project for the conservation of Vembanadu Lake;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether Government have granted any funds to Kerala for implementing the Pollution Abatement Scheme of River Pamba and if so, whether the Government of Kerala implemented the above project; and

(e) whether Government would consider to adopt any legisation for restricting illegal sand mining in the rivers and illegal conversion of wetlands?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) Three lakes *viz* Sasthamkotta, Ashtamudi and Vembanad Kol from Kerala have been included in the list of Ramsar sites in 2002. Vambanad Lake from Kerala is not included under National Lake Conservation Programme.

(b) and (c) Vembanad Lake has been identified under National Wetland Conservation Programme for assistance on 26.12.05 in the meeting of National Wetland Committee held at Gopalpur, Orissa. The State Government of Kerala has been asked to prepare a comprehensive Management Action Plan for its conservation and management.

(d) Pamba River Action Plan having total cost of Rs. 18.45 crores has been sanctioned and an amount of Rs. 75.00 lakhs has been released so far under the National River Conservation Plan for carrying out activities of pollution abatement works and for cleaning of Pamba River.

(e) The enforcement and regulatory functions under the povisions of various Acts are performed by the respective State Governments. The process of strengthening the regulatory regime is an ongoing exercise.

Development of national parks and sanctuaries in Madhya Pradesh

†2469. SHRI P.K. MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of proposals sent by the Government of Madhya Pradesh regarding the development of national parks and sanctuaries;

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.